



# NORWALK-LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## La Mirada High Seniors Ready to Instill Matador Pride to Prestigious Universities

Three La Mirada High School students have crossed the globe, hiked soaring mountains and dedicated hundreds of hours to volunteer service in pursuit of passions that next will take them to some of the most prestigious universities in the country.

Vittorio Reynoso-Avila, Meghan Miller and Dante Gonzales will be graduating as some of La Mirada High's top students with experiences that led them to be school leaders and passionate individuals.

"These three outstanding students are representative of the hard work and spirit you find throughout our District," NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian said. "Vittorio, Meghan and Dante are an inspiration to students and teachers. I wish them the best of luck in their journeys."

Reynos-Avila can break down complex mathematical equations in the classroom and perform magic on the basketball court. As a starting guard for the La Mirada High basketball team, Reynoso-Avila led the team to its first CIF State Championship in 2015, attracting the attention of college recruiters offering full athletic scholarships.

Reynoso-Avila, who has a 4.69 GPA, earned a full-ride Basketball scholarship to Princeton and chose the Ivy League university as part of a long-term career strategy.

"Eventually, the ball will stop bouncing," said Reynoso-Avila. "This is not a four-year decision. It's a 40-year decision."

Miller has a deep passion for adventure and travel, and an eye toward a career in international business and finance. After being accepted by 11 colleges, Miller, who has a 4.83 GPA and is president of the Matador Scholar Association (MSA), chose Vanderbilt University for its idyllic campus, academic rigor and potential for networking.

Miller visited South Africa during her senior trip, where she went on a safari and came face to face with great white sharks while scuba diving. Miller interned at a wildlife sanctuary, which extended an offer for her to come back and work for its rescue center. She plans to return in July.

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"I am most proud of my work with the MSA, and greatly appreciative of the guidance of my adviser Melissa Naudin," Miller said. "When I joined the MSA in my freshman year, we had 40 students. Now we have over 200 and it continues to grow. MSA is helping La Mirada students realize their potential and attend the college of their dreams."

Gonzales divides his time between the National Honors Society, California Scholarship Federation, MSA, the campus microbiology and tennis clubs, and school studies. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he has logged more than 1,600 volunteer hours since his freshman year and is a dedicated Eagle Scout. He has also scaled Mt. Whitney twice.

Gonzales is preparing for a career in environmental politics. Passionate about his Latino heritage, he chose UC Berkeley for its culture and academic reputation. Gonzales credits his Spanish teacher, Manuel Jaen, for going beyond the classroom curriculum, stressing character and urging Gonzales to make choosing his college a personal endeavor.

"When I went to Berkeley, I saw a history of my heritage in all the new people I met," Gonzales said. "As I toured the campus I could see how all of our personal experiences are being added together, and it makes me hopeful for the future."

Reynoso-Avila, Miller and Gonzales were among 100 of La Mirada's top scholars commemorated at the MSA Honors rally at La Mirada High on May 25.

"Our mission at Norwalk-La Mirada is to instill a culture of high expectations that produces life-long learners who are ready for colleges and career," NLMUSD Board President Karen Morrison said. "Congratulations to our students, and thank you to our hard working faculty and staff across the District for maintaining this environment of excellence."

**PHOTO:**

**NLMUSD\_LAMIRADAHIGH1:** La Mirada High Class of 2016 graduates Dante Gonzales, Vittorio Reynoso-Avila and Meghan Miller proudly display the pennants of the prestigious universities they will attend in the fall.

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